

Hi my name is _____ and this is the 8th principle minute.

Unitarian Universalist around the country have committed to dismantling racism beginning with their own practices, their identity and their own stories.

As a congregation, we have been aware of and discussing “cultural appropriation” for many years. We do strive to do it right; to not borrow practices without attribution and to not use borrowed elements out of context. We strive to do it right, but we should not assume we get it right every time.

It’s always a good idea to step back on occasion and check our knowledge. So what is Cultural Appropriation? The idea of borrowing, sharing, or being inspired by another culture. People often use cultural appropriation & cultural misappropriation interchangeably now. Cultural misappropriation is when a dominant group (usually white people, communities, or brands) profits, dresses, acts, and/or adopts cultural practices, behaviors, and beliefs of a BIPOC community. And it’s the cultural misappropriation that is most problematic.

Once we pass the resolution adopting the 8th principle, we need to begin examining our own institution and its practices. One area for introspection is determining if we have processes in place to guard against cultural misappropriation. While it will be necessary to determine whether or not we have been doing the right thing in the past, perhaps it’s more important to construct systemic controls to make sure we do the right thing in the future.

If we add the 8th principle to the existing 7, we need to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions. Together we will continue to educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist.